

Statement on Strengthening Police and Judicial Institutions in Countries Where Peacekeeping Forces Are Deployed *February 24, 2000*

I have just signed a Presidential decision directive (PDD) that will improve America's ability to strengthen police and judicial institutions in countries where peacekeeping forces are deployed. The PDD directs the Departments of State, Defense, and Justice to undertake a series of critical enhancements in the areas of police-military coordination as well as in police, penal, and judicial training and development.

In peacekeeping missions from the Balkans to East Timor, establishing basic law and order has been among the most important—and formidable—challenges. Developing effective local police forces, establishing credible court and penal systems, and reforming legal codes can make the crucial difference between building a just future and lapsing back into conflict.

When fully implemented, this PDD will help overcome major obstacles that currently confront

international peacekeeping operations. By enhancing cooperation between police and military peacekeepers, we will better ensure public security during these operations. By more effectively training and fielding international police monitors, we will better ensure that local police fairly and effectively prevent the breakdown of law and order in post-conflict societies. And by improving our ability to provide assistance to local judicial and penal institutions, we will better ensure accountability as well as confidence among local populations often traumatized by the conflicts they have endured.

We must do everything possible to improve our ability to help countries in transition to get the job done and to encourage other governments and the United Nations to be deeply engaged in these efforts.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in New York City *February 24, 2000*

If I had any sense, I would quit while I'm ahead. [Laughter] Next time we have an argument, Shelby, I'm going to play that back to you. We tape everything like this. [Laughter] Thank you, Shelby. Thank you, Leo. Thank you, all of you, ladies and gentlemen, for being here tonight and for your support at, I think, a very critical time.

I would like to make just a few brief remarks, and I'd like to begin by thanking all of you for the contributions that you have made to America's prosperity. I have had occasion over the last couple of months—because we were coming up to February, and if the economy kept growing, then we knew it would be the longest economic expansion in our history and the first time we ever had an economic expansion remotely this long without a war somewhere in there chugging up things. And so—and I knew that I would be doing interviews and members of the press would be asking me, "Well, what caused all this?"

And I thank you for what you said. But if I could go back, my whole theory was, in 1991 and 1992 when I was running for President on the economic issues, is that there was this enormous pent-up capacity in the American economy; a whole culture of entrepreneurship; dramatic restructuring of traditional industries which had gone on in the 1980's in response to all the competition we had; by then, already 20, really almost a 40-year history, but certainly a 20-year history that went through my Republican predecessors as well, of having at least the Presidents always support open markets and expanded trade, which I think is a very important part of this whole strategy. And I think we should be doing more of it, and I'll say more about that in a minute.

But I had a feeling that there was something structurally amiss that kept holding us down. We'd go into these recessions and then we'd get out, but we had anemic recoveries. We were in the midst of a statistical recovery that was

generating no jobs. Unemployment was still going up.

And I felt strongly that it was the product of two things. Number one, we didn't get rid of the structural deficit that was created in 1981, when we were in a recession and you could make a compelling argument that we needed to do what governments had been doing since the Great Depression, either cut taxes or increase public investment or both, to get us out of the recession. But always before, after a period when the economy started to grow again, we got rid of it. And instead—I think because we were in the grip of an ideology that said Government is always the problem, it will mess up a two-car parade, and you should never, ever do anything that increases revenues or does anything about this deficit—we had built in these huge interest rates and serious, serious imbalances in our economy.

The second thing that I thought was holding us back is there was no real coherent theory about what kind of economy we were trying to create, what our role ought to be, and what your role was bound to be. And so we set about trying to change that. And I think that we ought to say here that—I felt confident that if we could get the deficit cut in half and then get rid of it, that we would lower the structure of interest rates in a way that would put more money into the hands of ordinary American consumers and make capital more available at more affordable rates to investors and to entrepreneurs.

No one predicted that the recovery would go on as long and be as strong as it has, because no one had an economic model to measure the impact of technology on productivity. And one of the things I always say is, you have to give the Federal Reserve a lot of credit for this because if Alan Greenspan had followed all the textbook economic models, he could have killed this recovery, because everybody would have said, "Well, after 2 years or 3 years or 4 years or 5 years, some point along the way, you've got to shut this down, because every time this has ever happened before, inflation has been raging." And he was willing to look at the evidence, not the theory, and not get in your way.

And what I tried to do was two things. I've always believed that the primary role of Government in the globalized information society in which we live is to establish the conditions and give people the tools necessary to make the most

of their own enterprise and their own talents, and to invest in those things that otherwise would not be invested in, without which we cannot be the society we ought to be. That's basically what I think the role of Government is.

So the first thing we had to do was get rid of the deficit. And you heard Shelby say that—pointed out that Al Gore passed the tie-breaking vote. One of his great lines is, "Whenever I vote, we win." [Laughter] And I must say, I didn't have any gray hair when I became President. He's cast too many votes to suit me; there are all these close votes, you know. [Laughter] But it's true, whenever he votes we win.

And when we announced the economic program—just when we announced it—when Lloyd Bentsen announced it in December of '92, the bond market went up; the interest rates dropped; and the rest is history. And the deficit reduction package turned out to have greater savings than we thought because there was more economic growth than we thought being triggered out of it.

Then in '97, we had a bipartisan Balanced Budget Act that carried big majorities of both parties in both Houses. And I thought we had established the first bipartisan economic policy, or at least fiscal policy, in 16 years. And then the Congress passed the tax cut I felt strongly was too big, given the obligations out there on Social Security and Medicare and other things, and I vetoed it. And now, just listening to the debate, we might be about to get back to a bipartisan fiscal policy. But I think that is very important.

The other thing we tried to do, the second thing I think is also very important—I believed that it was very, very important that we do other things, the financial modernization bill, a continued aggressive trade policy. We've had over 270 trade agreements.

I hope all of you will support my attempt to bring China into the World Trade Organization by giving them permanent normal trading status. I think it's very important, not just for economic reasons but for economic reasons among others. And it's a 100 percent economic winner for us because we make no concessions except to let them come in, and they open their markets to us. I also think it would be very good for the cause of freedom and human rights in China.

Then I thought the Telecom Act was very important. And I know a lot of you do. But we had these big, big fights, some of which were public, some of which weren't so public, because we were trying so hard to get it right. And it seems to me that, other things being equal, we ought to always opt for competition. We ought to always opt for—we've got an idea-based economy here.

One factor that never gets enough credit, by the way, I think, in America's recovery is the sophistication of our capital markets. Just like the failure of the S&L crisis and doing deregulation in the wrong way helped to hurt us badly in the eighties, I think the sophistication of capital markets in America today has played a major role in this long-term recovery. The ability of people who have good ideas to get capital and the kinds of judgments that have been made have been—on the whole, have served this country very, very well. So the Telecom Act I think had a big role in this.

I think the fact that we have continued to aggressively invest in research, in science and in technology, in biomedical science but in other science as well, is going to have a big long-term impact. And I believe, over the long run, the fact that we've doubled investment in education and training generally and dramatically increased the college-going rate will help a lot of companies to sustain their growth and their prosperity.

So I feel good about where we are. And I guess what I would ask all of you to think about is—and what I hope the subject of this election will be, because I'll be a citizen bystander, not a candidate—is, now what?

I mean, you know, 7 years ago we had high unemployment, low growth; we'd quadrupled the debt. The social problems were getting worse, and we had total political gridlock. The country's sort of turned around now. And almost every—almost every social indicator is better. We have the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest female unemployment in 40 years, the lowest poverty rate among single-parent households—poverty rate—in 46 years. There are more people in poverty there because there are so many more single-parent households.

We have very robust movement. And the real question ought to be, what are we going to do with this moment of prosperity? And I talked about that in length, as Ed Rendell said, I al-

most put him to sleep in the State of the Union. [Laughter] But I would just like to reiterate. It seems to me that these are the questions we have to ask.

And my answer is, number one, we've got to try to keep this economy going. And when a downturn comes, we've got to do our best to make sure it's minimal in duration and depth, whenever that is. I think continuing to pay down the debt is very important. And there is some difference of opinion about that. But let me say why.

We financed—you can't expand the economy this quick without people borrowing money and going into debt. People have to borrow money to start most businesses. And of course, there's been a lot of consumer debt, too, but basically you've got all this business borrowing. I think it's served us well. But the net debt of the country can be much less if we're continuing to save by paying the Government debt down, and I think we ought to keep going. I know a lot of people in the bond market disagree with this, but I think we ought to have a goal of making America debt-free over the next 13 years because it will lower the interest rate structure over the long run. And I think it's good social policy.

You know, the average person—I had an economic analysis given to me the other day that said the average person, because of lower interest rates over the last 7 years, was saving \$2,000 a year on home mortgage payments and \$200 a year on car payments and college loan payments. So I think it's good social policy, and I know it's good economic policy. It maintains confidence, and it frees up capital, and it keeps the economy in greater balance. So I think that's the first thing.

The second thing I think we have to do is to try to do more to bring prosperity to the people in places where it hasn't reached yet. I think that—one of you said to me tonight that you approved of our attempts to close the digital divide, but it shouldn't be seen as social policy, it ought to be seen as part of our long-term economic strategy to increase economic growth.

If you think about how the American economy can grow, we have to find more businesses and more consumers, more employees, and more purchasers. We do that by expanding trade. We also do that by expanding opportunities to the people in places in this country that

haven't yet been a part of it. Some of them are in inner cities; some of them are in small rural areas; some of them are on Indian reservations.

I bought Christmas gifts over the Internet this year to try to show that I'm not as hobbled as Al Gore says I am—[laughter]—but also to make a point about this. I bought two Christmas gifts from the Lakota craftsmen on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, where the unemployment rate is still 70 percent, 7-0. Now, these people do not want to leave the land of their ancestors, and they should not have to do so to make a decent life. But they are way away from any kind of big market. It's not easy to get there. If you go visit, it's probably because you wanted to go out and see Mount Rushmore or the Crazy Horse Monument. But the Internet gives them a chance to build an economy without moving.

It's for the same reason I'm trying to make it easier for poor people to own cars without losing their food stamps, because two-thirds of the new jobs are in suburbs and three-quarters of the people who need work are in rural areas and inner cities. Somehow they've got to get where the jobs are, even if they're willing to go back to community college and train.

I did an event this week at the White House with a young 24-year-old man who lives in a small town near Buffalo, New York, who is going back to community college, learning how to repair computers. He's a single father with two kids. And under the old rules, if he'd gotten a car, he wouldn't have been able to keep his food stamps for his kids. This kid is out there doing everything he's supposed to do. And there's millions of people like that. We're here having a great dinner tonight; there are a lot of people out there who have to think about it before they take their kids to McDonald's.

So I think that there is so much we can do. One of our proposals in this budget is to give people the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give them to invest in Latin America or Asia or Africa—which I support, but I think we should have the same incentives here.

And I want to try to do more to set up 1,000 community computer centers around the country in areas that wouldn't have them otherwise, so that not just kids in the schools with Internet hookups but adults can come in and become conversant and figure out how to do it.

I was out in northern California the other day with some young executives at eBay, and they told me over 20,000 people are now making a living off eBay, not working for eBay, making a living buying and selling. And they said they've done some profiles of these people, and a substantial number of them used to be on welfare. And if you believe that intelligence is more or less equally distributed and so is good and bad luck, there's a lot of other people that could be doing that if we could figure out ways to hook them into the future. So I think that's very important.

I think we ought to make access to college universal, which is why I want to make college tuition tax-deductible.

I think we ought to do more to help people balance work and family, which is why I want to expand the reach of the family leave law. I was told that if I passed the family leave law and signed it, it would hurt the American economy. But it's hard to prove. We've had 20 million people take some time off from work when a baby was born or a parent was sick, and we've got 21 million new jobs. So I think the evidence is—I believe most of you work in places where you think, if the people who work with you aren't worried sick about their children while they're at work, they're more productive and they do better.

I believe we ought to do more to be a better partner around the world, not just with the China-WTO but with the Africa and the Caribbean trade initiatives I put up there, with the debt relief to poor countries that could be doing more trade with us.

And these are the kinds of things that I want you to think about. I won't go through the whole litany of issues, but a lot of you know a lot about this economy. A lot of you have been a big part of it, and you live in a dynamic world. The thing that I want most for my country now is for this to be a dynamic decision-making process in this election. The worst thing we could do is to think—and I appreciate what Ed said about people who said they supported my policy. But if someone were running for President and said, "Vote for me. I'll do exactly what Bill Clinton did," I would vote against that person, because I think we should stay with the direction of the policy, but we have to keep changing. We have to keep seeking new frontiers. We have to keep moving.

And Government is no different from your enterprises. Whatever you do, it is no different. We still have—we're still bedeviled by some old problems. You know, all these hate crimes you see that are so upsetting, where somebody gets killed or shot just because of their religion or because they're gay or because of their race, that shows you that in this most modern of worlds we're still subject to very primitive emotions, even in this country; that we still have our more minor versions of the conflicts that have engulfed the Balkans, that bedevil the Middle East, that torment India and Pakistan over Kashmir.

So these are the things I want you to think about, because I'm convinced that we have a chance that maybe has never before existed in my lifetime, to work together as a country to build the future of our dreams for our children and be a truly good citizen in the world and to benefit from it. And I think we'll make more money doing the right things. And that's what I want for my country.

Now, a lot of you are younger than I am, but a lot of you are about my age, and I want to tell you, when I was studying this whole deal about this expansion, I noted that the longest expansion in American history before this was between 1961 and 1969. And I'll just close with this thought. I graduated from high school in 1964. President Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. Some people write about the history of the last 30 years and American cynicism and all that business, and they say it all started then. That's not true.

I was there. Americans were not cynical after John Kennedy was murdered. They were heartbroken but not cynical. And they united behind Lyndon Johnson. He won an enormous election mandate. We were passing civil rights legislation. And most people believed in 1964, when I graduated from high school, that we could keep low unemployment, high growth, low inflation going indefinitely. They thought we could actually bring opportunity to people in poor areas; there were differences about how to do it. And they thought we would solve the civil rights challenges of America through the Congress,

through the courts, in a lawful way. And they thought we would successfully pursue the cold war until eventually we prevailed. That's what we thought. In other words, we were about as confident then as we are now.

Two years later, we had riots erupting in our cities. The country was becoming divided over Vietnam. The economy began to be unraveled over the conflict between guns and butter. Four years later, when I graduated from college,* it was 2 days after Robert Kennedy was killed, 2 months after Martin Luther King was killed, 9 weeks after Lyndon Johnson said he wouldn't run for President again. The country was totally divided over the war in Vietnam. And we elected a President of, I think, immense ability, but on a campaign of division. He said he represented the Silent Majority, which would mean, I guess, the rest of us were in the loud minority. [Laughter] And it was "us" against "them." And we've been playing "us" against "them" politics ever since.

I have done my best to bring an end to that—I'm sure you would admit, with decidedly mixed results. But I have done my best to bring an end to that, because I'm old enough to know that today's confidence can get away in a hurry.

And I say this to you not as a President but as a person, as an American. I have waited now for 35 years for my country to have the chance I thought we had 35 years ago. And I don't want us to squander it. If somebody asks you why you came here tonight, give them that for an answer. And think about, in your own mind and heart, what you think we have to do to make the most of this. We've been given a second chance, those of you who are my age or older, and we need to make the most of it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 p.m. at the Restaurant Daniel. In his remarks, he referred to Shelby Bryan, event host; Leo J. Russell, president, Pride Technologies; former Secretary of the Treasury Lloyd Bentsen; and Edward G. Rendell, general chair, Democratic National Committee.

* White House correction.